DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 852 PS 013 391

AUTHOR Mosley, Beatrice B.; Plue, W. V.
TITLE A Comparative Study of Four Curriculum Programs for Disadvantaged Preschool Children.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 16p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *Disadvantaged Youth; *Experimental Curriculum; *Language Skills; Measures (Individuals); *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Pretests Posttests; *Program Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken to determine whether four commercially prepared language programs would bring about better gains in the language achievement of disadvantaged preschool children than would activities planned by teachers themselves. The four commercial programs included the Peabody Language Development Kit: Preschool (PLDK-P); the Ginn Language Development Program-A (GLDP-A); the Open Court Language Development Program: Kindergarten (OLLDP-K); and the Distar Language Program: I (DLP-I). In addition, a program called "Control Language Development: Kindergarten" (CLDP-K) was used; this consisted of activities planned by the teachers themselves that did not follow a prescribed manual or outline. Children in 10 Head Start classes were randomly assigned to a treatment group consisting of two teachers and their classes. All 140 children met the criteria for "disadvantagedness" based on parent occupation and other indices on the Office of Economic Opportunities poverty guidelines. Subjects were tested once prior to the experiment for their initial language skills and then again after 60 days of instruction. Comparisons of subjects' pretest and posttest scores indicated that all four structured programs produced better gains than did the teacher-made materials. Of the four programs studied, the Peabody Language Development Kit (PLDK-P) seemed to produce better general results than did the others. (MP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED226852

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FOUR CURRICULUM PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

BEATRICE B. MOSLEY

PROFESSOR AND

DEAN, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

W. V. PLUE

PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

PS013391

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Beatrice B. Mosley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FOUR CURRICULUM PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

For more than a decade, increased attention has been focused upon the education of young children. More specifically, the program of trying to ensure optimal development for "disadvantaged" youngsters continues to be of primary concern for education professionals, child development specialists, and psychologists alike. Realizing that many first graders enter school with poorly developed skills to achieve academically, it is apparent that there is need for more collaboration on the part of the aforementioned professionals in terms of ferreting out the most important facets which tend to effect cognitive development and further, to translate their findings to program designers and teachers so as to impact on instructional materials thereby improving achievement levels of young children.

Many authorities agree that language development appears to be basic to intellectual functioning. (Ausubel, 1964) suggests that "it is in the area of language development, and particularly with respect to the abstract dimensions of verbal functioning that the culturally deprived child manifests the greatest degree of intellectual retardation" (p. 314).

In a survey of the research literature on language development and disadvantaged children, three major problem areas have been identified; they are:

1. Poverty stricken children reveal deficiencies in language development which become more pronounced

upon entering school and serve to handicap them academically.

2. Intervention during the critical preschool years may be expected to counteract demonstrated language deficiencies of disadvantaged children.
3. Structured preschool programs tend to bring about gains in a wider range of language cognitive skills than unstructured ones.

Since the inception of Head Start, the field of early childhood education has become inundated with commercially prepared curricular materials. Such instructional materials have received wide publicity and all suggest, strongly, that they will, if followed, bring about gains in achievement levels of preschool age children. The major problem which exists is the lack of knowledge as to which of the structured programs tend to be more effective in building language skills for disadvantaged preschoolers.

For this reason, the present research sought to study comparative interaction through experimental design to explore four curricula programs in actual classroom settings. The four programs included the Peabody Language Development Kit: Preschool (PLDK-P), Ginn Language Development Program-A (GLDP-A), Open Court Language Development Program: Kindergarten (OCLDP-K), and the Distar Language Program: I(DLP-I). In addition, a control group called, "Control Language Development Program: Kindergarten (CLDP-K)," was utilized which consisted of activities planned by the teachers themselves and did not follow a prescribed manual or outline. Progress was reviewed over a six week period.

Methodology

Ten Head Start classes were utilized with each unit randomly assigned to a treatment group; each group consisting of two teachers and their classes. All children met the criteria for "disadvantageness" based on parent occupation, income, receiving welfare, receiving food stamps, and other indices on the OEO Poverty Guidelines. Further, all pupils were given the Primary Mental Abilities test (PMA) (K-1) for the purpose of estimating general levels of the children participating in the study. Table 1 provides demographic data relating to the pupils and teachers in the study.

The data reflects an experimental population reasonably similar in numbers, male-female ratio, and in chronological ages. The PMA scores were not atypical intellectual (or achievement) estimates from disadvantaged children. Group means, did, however, deviate statistically from total group means. For this reason, covarying procedures were utilized in further statistical treatment. The teachers showed similarities in terms of teaching experience and age.

For criterion measure, the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) was used. Pre tests were given prior to the experiment. After 60 days of instruction, which included 60 lessons in Open Court, 63 lessons in the Distar Program, and 60 teacher lessons in the Control group, post tests were made. Tests of significance were based upon group adjusted means through covaried statistical procedures (Garrett, 1958); with significance determined at the .05 level. Table 2 reveals the results of the ITPA measures.

In terms of raw score differences on the criterion measure, the PLDK-P produced greater gain scores than the other programs used in the study.

TABLE ONE: Demographic Data for Ten Head Start Classes

Randomly Assigned Group	Pupils					Teachers	
		Sex		Means			
	N	M	F	CA	PMA	Cum. Years Experience	Mean Age
A (Peabody	29	15	14	68.6	61.9	10	42.5
B (Ginn)	28	14	14	69.8	78.0	14	39.0
C (Open Court)	26	12	14	68.1	60.9	12	35.0
D (Distar)	29	15	14	68.7	68.1	11	47.5
E (Control)	28	14	14	67.9	78.9	10	35.0
	140	70	70	68.6	69.6	57	39.8

TABLE TWO: Analysis of Covariance of ITPA Total Raw Scores on Five Head Start Groups

Group	Pre-test Means Mx	Post-test Means My	Covaried Adjusted Means My.x	Gain Raw Score Points Dy.x
A (Peabody)	188.48	241.88	238.84	+50.36
B (Ginn)	186.82	227.11	225.32	+38.50
C (Open Court	177.12	204.15	206.72	+29.60
D (Distar	187.62	227.10	224.95	+37.33
E (Control)	173.43	191.14	195.35	+21.92
Total Means	182.84	218.61	218.61	+35.54

F ratio of Fx.y = 41.86 with df 4/135, is sig. at the .01 level

r tot = .73 b within = .45

t-ratio between means

A vs B	sig. .01	B vs D	n.s.
A vs C	sig. .01	B vs E	sig. .01
A vs D	sig. .01	C vs D	sig. .01
A vs E	sig. .01	C vs E	sig. .01
B vs C	sig. .01	D vs E	sig. .01

However, the Ginn and Distar programs also produced better than average raw scores gains. In order to determine which variables in the criterion measure seemed pronounced, an investigation was made of the ITPA sub-test scores. The results of this investigation are shown in Table 3 through covaried raw score gain analysis.

TABLE THREE: Analysis of Covariance of Statistically Significant ITPA Sub-test Gain Raw Scores with Five Head Start Groups

Mean Raw Gain Scores

Group	Auditory Reception	Auditory Association	Verbal Expression	Grammatic Closure	Visual Reception	Visual Association	Adjusted Totals
A (Peabody)	2.51	1.99	7.26	18.66	4.21	3.85	50.36
B (Ginn)	4.20	4.00	8.45	14.71	1.80	.66	38.50
C (Open Court)	.35	1.46	3.25	10.25	2.57	4.78	29.60
D (Distar)	4.19	2.99	4.09	11.45	2.35	4.10	37.33
E (Control)	2.34	3.79	3.77	5.58	-3.12	-2.15	21.92
Totals	2.72	2.89	5.54	11.54	1.56	2.25	35.54

Visual Seq. Mean; ns
Visual Closure; ns
Auditory Seq. Mean; ns
Manual Express.; ns

Discussion

According to this study, all experimental programs produced gain scores exceeding that of the control group. This would suggest that the structured curricula programs produced better achievement gains than did teacher planned activities.

The major gain scores came about in Grammatic Closure. In this respect, the Peabody and Ginn programs were outstanding, perhaps because the two programs also developed activity in verbal expression as evidence by much larger gain scores in Verbal Expression than found in the other programs. Of the two programs, Peabody, according to the ITPA data, had a more balanced curriculum with heavier loadings in Visual Reception and Visual Association. This might account for the higher totals found with this program.

Distar's program, seemingly, also had a balanced program with gain scores above average, except in Grammatic Closure (mean 11.45, mean average 11.54), although not attaining comparative gain scores of Peabody. According to the description of the Peabody program, it is designed for preschool pupils from disadvantaged areas. To the extent that this population was representative, the results suggest the program does well in meeting the needs of this group.

Distar's program suggest below average and average pupil population design. Language is considered complex and continuous with language activities interwoven with non-concentrated language activities. The approach, apparently, has some merit according to this population data. This program was the most successful in obtaining gain scores in more criterion factors.

The Ginn program views language as a prerequisite to learning to read, and has designed rather systematic instruction in the communication process. With this population results, the program suggested evidence of rather high concentrated auditory activity. It was, however, weaker in visual activity. As an auditory program, this program appears relevant.

In summary, the structured programs produced better gain scores than did teacher made programs. Of the four programs studied, the Peabody (PLDK-P) seemingly produced better general results than did the others. The Ginn (GLDP-A) and Distar (DLP-I) programs also produced results worthy of note. This information should be taken into account when selecting programs for young disadvantaged learners.

Obviously, more research is needed on the effects of structured language development programs on achievement of disadvantaged preschoolers. Curricula offerings for specific populations are many; however, only a few of these have been subjected to research. It is hoped that this study will be considered a start in determining the efficacy of curricula offerings for target populations.

REFERENCES

Ausubel, D. P. How reversible are the cognitive and motivational effects of cultural deprivation? Implications for teaching the culturally deprived child. In A. H. Passow, Education of the disadvantaged. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967. Reprinted from Urban Education, 1964, 1, 16-38, by permission of the author and publisher.

Ausubel, D. P. The effects of environmental deprivation and enrichment of the IQ. In A. H. Passow, Education of the disadvantaged. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967.

Bereiter, C., & Englemann, S. Teaching disadvantaged children in preschool. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.

Bereiter, C., et al. An introduction to the open court kindergarten program. LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1970.

Bernstein, B. Social class and linguistic development: A theory of social learning. In A. H. Halsey, et al. Education, economy and society. New York: Free Press, 1961.

Bernstein, B. Social class, linguistic codes, and grammatical elements. Language and Speech, 1962, 5, 221-40. (b)

Cazden, Courtney B. Language in early childhood education. National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, D. C., 1977.

Cook, S. S. An experimental language program for project head start. Selected convention papers, The Council for Exceptional Children, 1969.

Daniels, A. A., & Giles, D. E. A comparison of the oral language development of head start pupils with non-head start pupils. (Office of Education, DHEW) Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1966.

Dickie, J. P. Effectiveness of structured and unstructured (traditional) methods of language training. In M. A. Brottman (Ed.), Language remediation for the disadvantaged preschool child. Monograph of the Society for Research in Child Development, 1968, 33, 62-79.

Edwards, J., & Stern, C. A comparison of three intervention programs with disadvantaged preschool children. The Journal of Special Education, 1970, 4, (2), Spring-Summer.

Gerber, S. Language deficiency of disadvantaged children. Journal of Speech and Hearing Research, 1969, 2, 270-80.

Hess, P., & Shipman, V. Early blocks to children's learning. Children, 1965, 12, 189-94.

Hodges, W., et al. The development and evaluation of a diagnostically based curriculum for preschool psychosocially deprived children. (Office of Education, DHEW, Bureau of Research) Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967.

Karnes, M. B., et al. The effects of four programs of classroom intervention of the intellectual and language development of 4-year old disadvantaged children. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1970, 40, 58-76.

Leeper, S. H.; Skipper, D.; and Witherspoon, R. Good schools for young children, 4th, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1979.

McConnel, F., & Horton, K. B. Language development and cultural disadvantagement. Exceptional Children, 1960, 35, 597-606.

Seefeldt, Carol. A curriculum for preschools, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 2nd. Columbus, 1980.